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Letter dated 22 October 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 22 October 1997, addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Aytuğ Plümer, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex which contains a letter of His Excellency Mr. Rauf R. Denktaş, President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, dated 21 October 1997, would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 61, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hüseyin E. ÇELEM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Letter dated 22 October 1997 from Mr. Aytuğ Plûmer addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith the copy of a letter dated 21 October 1997 addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Rauf R. Denktaş, President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, in connection with the speech delivered by the Greek Cypriot leader, Mr. Glafcos Clerides, at the 25th plenary meeting of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, held on 6 October 1997, and his letter dated 29 September 1997 addressed to you and circulated as document A/52/412-S/1997/762.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 61, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Aytuğ Plûmer
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

APPENDIX

Letter dated 21 October 1997 from Mr. Rauf R. Denktaş, addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to the speech delivered by the Greek Cypriot leader, Mr. Glafcos Clerides, at the 25th plenary meeting of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, held on 6 October 1997, and his letter dated 29 September 1997 addressed to you and circulated as document A/52/412-S/1997/762.

In his address before the world body (see A/52/PV.25), Mr. Clerides has once again tried to portray the Turkish Cypriot side as the intransigent party with a barrage of allegations directed against us in the knowledge that, for reasons which are well known to all and need not be repeated here, there would be no Turkish Cypriots present to challenge his unfounded assertions. I am, therefore, compelled to respond to his remarks in writing.

In his speech, Mr. Clerides has conveniently forgotten his previous statements to the effect that he would be attending the direct negotiations that recently took place between the two sides at Troutbeck, New York, and Glion, Switzerland, 'against his better judgement'. The same Mr. Clerides also said that the Greek Cypriot decision to attend the direct talks was 'a purely cosmetic move in order not to appear the negative side and so harm the Republic's prospects of accession to the European Union' (The Greek Cypriot press, 3 June 1997). This has been the entire strategy of Mr. Clerides during the face-to-face talks.

The talks that I and Mr. Clerides had at Troutbeck and Glion against this background were not impeded by any 'preconditions' brought to the table by the Turkish Cypriot side, as Mr. Clerides claims, but by the rigid and immutable position of my counterpart which can be summed up as the rejection of the key aspects of a viable, just and realistic settlement, such as sovereignty, security and guarantees, political equality, the all-too-important balance between Turkey and Greece stipulated by the 1960 Agreements, and bi-zonality to be consolidated by property exchange.

While Mr. Clerides refused to budge an inch on those key issues that are vital for us and are indispensable elements of the bi-communal, bi-zonal settlement that we are seeking, the unwarranted interference of the European Union (EU) in the negotiations created further obstacles in the way of a comprehensive settlement. Here, I am referring to the European Commission's report entitled 'Agenda 2000' which, in complete disregard of the rule of law, the international treaties governing Cyprus, and our justified objections to EU membership before a settlement, envisages the commencement of accession negotiations with 'Cyprus', meaning the Greek Cypriot administration, in early 1998. It will be appreciated that the Greek Cypriot side, which had made no secret of the fact that it would be attending the direct negotiations only to enhance its prospects for EU membership, had no incentive to show the necessary flexibility at the negotiations in the light of the EU approach of clearing the way for accession negotiations prior to a political solution.

As for the subsequent Association Council Agreement signed between Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus on 6 August 1997, with which Mr. Clerides takes issue, I would like to reiterate that the agreement is nothing beyond a legitimate self-defence mechanism established in the face of the incessant Greek Cypriot attempts to impose its will on the Turkish Cypriot side through EU membership, which is unfortunately being encouraged by the words and deeds of EU itself. The Turkish Cypriot side could not be expected, in all fairness and justice, to sit idly by, without taking any action, while EU took steps bolstering the Greek Cypriot aspirations to turn Cyprus into a Greek Cypriot State in which our people would be treated, at best, as a "protected minority".

The very fact that I attended the second round of the direct talks held at Glion, in spite of the negative atmosphere created by the "Agenda 2000" report of the European Commission and my people's strong disappointment at the one-sided approach of EU, is testimony to our goodwill and commitment to achieving an overall settlement of the Cyprus question. The Turkish Cypriot side cannot be held responsible for the biased approach of EU, which has been the real impediment to progress in the talks.

It is ironic that the Greek Cypriot leader, who criticizes the Turkish Cypriot side for taking peaceful political measures to defend its rights and interests through establishing closer ties with Turkey, considers it his side's "sovereign right" to purchase and deploy any weapons it deems necessary, including the sophisticated S-300 missile system in defiance of the relevant Security Council resolutions and regardless of the serious dangers this poses to peace and stability both on the island and in the region. The range and capabilities of the S-300 missile system are manifestly beyond Greek Cypriot defence requirements and constitute a threat against Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot side.

Given the massive rearmament programme of the Greek Cypriot administration, the hiring of mainland Greek and Serbian soldiers for active duty, the ongoing construction of a naval base in the south for Greece and the opening of the newly constructed military air base for use by the Greek Air Force it is amply clear that the acquisition of the missiles is only a part of the provocative military preparations in south Cyprus carried out in line with the so-called "joint defence doctrine" with Greece.

An indication of the true intentions behind the joint Greek-Greek Cypriot front's activities has been the massive joint military exercises code-named "Nikiforos 97" carried out in south Cyprus between 10 and 14 October 1997. The joint manoeuvres, which turned out to be a real show of force with the participation of the Greek Air Force and Navy, were clearly offensive in character, involving the use of live ammunition and Greek paratroopers in a mock invasion of northern Cyprus. As if the display of such war scenarios was not obvious enough for all concerned, the Greek Cypriot Defence Minister, Mr. Costas Iliades, has made remarks to the effect that the Greek Cypriot side is ready for every kind of military action and that they are preparing surprises for Turkey (Greek Cypriot press, 6 October 1997).

This contrasts with the role of the Turkish Peace Force in Cyprus, which has kept the peace in Cyprus for over two decades. Mr. Clerides cannot use this in order to justify the Greek Cypriot arming frenzy, bringing current military expenditure in southern Cyprus to more than $2 million a day, nor his irresponsible attitude to push ahead with the deployment of the S-300 missile system in violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions reiterating concern over the introduction of such sophisticated weaponry into the Greek Cypriot arsenal.

It is a contradiction on the part of the Greek Cypriot side to profess "demilitarization" while at the same time refusing the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) package of proposals, which envisages the unmanning of certain areas along the buffer zone where the opposing forces are in close proximity to each other, the prohibition of loaded weapons along the ceasefire lines and a common code of conduct for soldiers deployed on both sides of the buffer zone. The truth of the matter is that the Greek Cypriot "demilitarization proposal" is simply a ruse for doing away with the Treaty of Guarantee, the only effective instrument which has stopped the Greek-Greek Cypriot drive for union with Greece and saved the Turkish Cypriot people from complete annihilation.

The Turkish Cypriot side has repeatedly made it known that, as envisaged in the United Nations set of ideas, demilitarization is a long-term objective which must not, and will not, adversely affect the Treaties of Guarantee and of Alliance.

As for Mr. Clerides' allegations on the humanitarian question of missing persons, it will be recalled that following the resignation in early March 1996 of Mr. Paul Wurth as the third member of the Committee on Missing Persons, former Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali wrote to me and Mr. Clerides twice in 1996, informing us that unless the points he outlined in relation to the work of the Committee on Missing Persons were implemented by both sides, he would not consider appointing a new third member. As the Turkish Cypriot side, we have accepted the Secretary-General's request and reiterated our support for his approach in our letter dated 17 February 1997 addressed to you as his successor. The Greek Cypriot side, however, has dismally failed to comply with the Secretary-General's requests and continued to play politics with the issue, only extending the agony of those who have lost their loved ones.

In conclusion, I wish to stress once again that the Greek Cypriot side, with the inhuman embargoes it has imposed against the Turkish Cypriot people; its so-called "joint defence doctrine" with Greece and accompanying militarization campaign bringing instability to the entire region; its unilateral drive to become an EU member; and its persistent refusal of partnership with the Turkish Cypriot side, has been erecting obstacle after obstacle in the way of a negotiated settlement and will continue to do so for as long as it is allowed to pose to the world as "the sole legitimate Government for the whole of Cyprus".

The Turkish Cypriot side is dedicated to achieving a just and lasting solution in Cyprus and will continue to work constructively with you and your representatives in the search for a mutually acceptable settlement. It is our

firm belief, however, that until and unless the two sides in Cyprus are accorded full equal status, the Greek Cypriot side will continue to render fruitless all efforts towards a negotiated settlement. I remain hopeful that, at this critical juncture we have reached in the negotiating process, the international community will act in awareness of this reality in its approach to this long-standing dispute.

(Signed) Rauf R. DENKTAŞ
President